1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

We can now place the two systems of industry side by side and compare their respective assets and defects. Against highly efficient co-operation and mutual assistance embodied in the guild organization we have to set the free play of competition allowed in individual crafts. Against the principle of continuity and planned training we have to set higher adaptability and larger scope for individual initiative and inventiveness. Broadly speaking, it cannot be doubted that uncontrolled, 'individualistic', industries stand a higher chance of developing production, possibly on new lines, and of achieving technical progress. Moreover, efficient training and continuity of craft knowledge can, to some extent, also be assured in the narrower form of co-operation vested in the small labour-unit; this is shown in the village groups of blacksmiths and weavers. The question which we have asked at the beginning of this section thus still stands: Why has Nupe society chosen, of these two possible methods of organizing industrial enterprise, the method that assured group efficiency and continuity on the largest scale, and group efficiency rather than progress and individual initiative?

The main reason lies in the political system of the country. The guilds are, as we have seen, built closely into the political framework. Let me recall the main facts: the guild-head is the agent of the king in all matters concerning the group; like the members of the nobility, he is the holder of an official rank, and is admitted to the *nkó*, the King's Council. The guilds themselves enjoy a privileged position in the Nupe state in that they were exempted from tax and were assigned a social position superior to that of other commoners, peasants, or traders. Yet they were, in other respects, very much controlled; they were bound to their profession and could not freely change it. They were even bound to the locality in which they practised their trade and could not move from it without permission of the guild-head. If a village chief desired to have a certain Bida craft represented in his village, he had to apply to the guild-head in the capital; this happened some years ago in Kutigi, when the chief requested the guild-head of the carpenters in Bida to send him a craftsman to settle and practise in his village. The craftsmen, then, are the king's craftsmen. Not only are they dependent on the king for their prosperity, but they are also controlled and supervised by him and his official agent, the guild-master. This organization of the craft-guilds amounts to a full control of the political system over all the more important industries of the country. We may even go further and say that this control was dictated by the needs of the state: based on constant warfare, committed to uphold the splendour of a huge court, the political system has to guarantee a dependable, uninterrupted supply of all that is needed—arms, tools, clothes, saddles, as well as the many symbols of wealth and status. Upon this dedication of the craft-guilds to the service of the state the seal is set by the discriminative social appreciation which the Nupe people extend to the different crafts.[1] The noblest craft is that of the brass- and sword-smiths, for they, as an informant put it, are 'the makers of arms'.

[1] See p. 103.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

of time by their family and relations; and many will, or hope that they will, some day return to their home country.[1]

In this description I have dealt with professional and non-professional traders as if they represented sharply distinct classes. There is, in fact, good sense in speaking in Nupe of *cewoce* or *koragba*, 'trader', as against other professions. The line of division, however, is fluid. It is more fluid among women than among men. Among the men we can at least define the extremes: the big trader is nothing but a trader, and the cultivator or guild craftsman is never a trader. But trade on a small scale goes hand in hand with the individual crafts and 'free professions', and an occasional business deal is welcome to everybody. But here a further distinction is necessary. The Nupe distinguish between traders proper and brokers, *dilali*. The brokers have as a rule their booths on the market, and undertake to sell goods for their clients for a small commission. It is interesting to note that while the Nupe traders are 'free' professions in every respect, the brokers are organized in a guild-like organization. They elect a guild-head, the *Etsu* or *Sarkin Dilali*, who is confirmed by the king and keeps in close contact with the court. As soon as a new trade caravan arrives at the *zongu* (the traders' camp outside the gates of Bida) he will go and see the traders and inspect their goods. It is his duty also to inform the king of caravans and goods that have arrived. He must ascertain the king's wishes with respect to these goods before he allows them to be placed on the open market. Here, then, we find again the element of political control which is so closely associated with guild organization. The *Etsu Dilali*, placed in control over all Bida brokers, levies a small fee from them, in return for which he guarantees them equal access to the valuable and profitable goods which arrive in Bida from abroad. He, and through him the whole organization of brokers, thus guarantee to clients and fellow members an efficient marketing organization, the avoidance of unsound competition, and business integrity. The organization of brokers differs in certain respects essentially from the guild organization proper. It does not utilize the principles of kinship (real or fictitious); nor does it attempt in any other way to ensure the solidarity and continuity of the professional group. It represents a 'free' association of 'free' business men, coming very close to the principle of the modern professional union.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (III)

The market census given above has shown that marketing and trade, too, are subject to the rules regulating division of labour between men and women. We can formulate certain general rules: all food-stuffs and agricultural produce, and of native industrial products manufactured by men those that are typical women's articles, are traded by women. To the first category must also be counted the native stimulants, tobacco for

[1] These remarks refer to a typical Nupe traders' colony in Ibadan which I have studied at some length. An instance of a trading-colony which has sprung up quite suddenly is Agege, a village ten miles north of Lagos, which, in 1936, had been in existence for five years only.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

511 583 rarely paid over at once; as a rule the various part-payments are made in the course of three to five years, in the order just given. The first gift, the Greeting, is meant to seal the betrothal and the agreement of the parents of bride and bridegroom. The various gifts listed after the Great Thanks are left till immediately before the marriage ceremony. Only the two largest 'instalments', Small Thanks and Great Thanks, can be paid partly in the form of gifts of cloth or beads; all other gifts must be in money. Let me give a concrete illustration. The bride-price of N., of Kutigi, who married in 1934, consisted of the following payments, all of which were in money:

	£	s.	d.
Greeting		1	6
Small Thanks		10	0
Great Thanks	3	0	0
Money for Henna		5	0
Money for Pots		10	0
Gifts to bridesmaids		2	6
Four annual gifts of food, to the total value of		10	0
Total	£4	19	0

Bride-price in Nupe has undergone great changes. From £3 in pre-British days it has risen later to £10, £15, and even £20. Recently it has fallen again to a more modest sum, between £5 and £10. The height of the bride-price has, in fact, caused the Administration to intervene in 1934, and to lay down a maximum amount of £7. On the whole, the people welcomed the reduction. But it has not been adopted uniformly; I have found a bride-price of £9 and £10 still being paid two years after the law was enacted. In very poor households, on the other hand, the reduction has merely academic significance, as these people may not be able to afford even that amount. My informations were that originally the bride-price represented a fixed sum—*gba shita*, 120,000 cowries (£3)—which did not vary with, nor depend on, prosperity or social status, as it does to-day. Similarly every item of the bride-price was fixed traditionally, the amounts in cowries being frequently used as alternative terms for some of these payments. This is the series of payments in the traditional Nupe bride-price:

[56]

	£	s.
Gba (lit. 2,000 cowries—a preliminary gift absorbed to-day in the Greeting)		1
Greeting, or *gbaota* (lit. 6,000 cowries)		3
Small Thanks		12
Great Thanks	2	10
Total	£3	6

With the rise, and subsequent fall, in the bride-price its amount was made dependent upon the varying standards of living. It is significant that the large items in the bride-price, Small and Great Thanks, have remained comparatively unchanged; the changes affected chiefly the smaller gifts, new ones being included, or increased or decreased in amount. Now a large bride-price, which comprises all these various gifts, is still the ideal. But certain new ways have been found to harmonize the ideal with lower standards

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

halving the costs of the festivity. In many essentially pagan villages Mohammedan burials are now becoming the fashion partly because, as I have reasons to believe, they are cheaper than the more elaborate pagan funeral feasts. Are then traditional customs such weak incentives, and regarded as of so little importance, that they are easily modified and even abandoned? Or shall we interpret this lack of appreciation as being due to an eminently reasonable attitude of the Nupe peasant? The answer is that the Nupe peasant or craftsman has little or no alternative choice. He is faced with two rigid, inescapable, demands which, between them, eliminate nearly all freedom of choice: one is maintenance of labour, involving food-supplies, clothing, and, to some extent at least, payment of bride-price for the labour-group on the co-operation of which the livelihood of the family depends; the other, even more rigid, demand is tax. The surrender of all these cultural wants is a result, not of 'reasonableness' or free choice, but essentially of external pressure.[1] That they still represent valid 'values', capable of determining social behaviour, is shown in that radical solution to secure their satisfaction individually if it proved impossible to secure them for the whole group, even at the risk of destroying the labour-unit.

The part played by tax in this failure of the Nupe household to adjust itself to the various cultural requirements was shown clearly in our analysis of the household budgets. We have seen that the balance could be maintained without difficulty only where a home industry (which, as we have seen, is carried out as individual work) could be relied on as a subsidiary means of the family income. Administrative Officers are well aware of this fact. Indeed, some are of the opinion that additional handicrafts or similar occupations, for example, work as temporary labourers, should be encouraged as a means of procuring money for tax without deranging the general scheme of household economy. Two Administrative Officers, of long experience, have pointed out to me that among the Hausa it is an established custom for young peasants to travel during the dry season and seek work of this kind, which would later enable them to pay their tax without difficulty. I am not qualified to discuss the fiscal implications of such a policy. But I may be allowed to point out its probable sociological and psychological effects, namely, that the encouragement of temporary labour of individuals must further, and indeed favour, that break-up of the labour- and family-unit the beginnings of which are already visible.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

We turn to the highest standard of living, that accepted by the upper classes of Nupe. Their needs and demands, the 'things they do' with their wealth, can again be grouped under the three headings which

[1] It must be said that certain Administrative Officers regard native festivities which fall in the time when tax is being collected as definitely conflicting with the prompt payment of tax. I have already mentioned (see p. 64) that in Bida Emirate all festivities (which, incidentally, happened to include certain harvest and fertility rites) were forbidden for a certain period until tax arrears had been paid.